(c) and (d) Government are aware of collaboration between Pakistan and China in a number of defence related projects including that relating to the development of a Main Battle Tank MBT 2000 (Al Khalid). Government have highlighted, in bilateral and multilateral fora, its concern at the continuing supply by China of sophisticated weapons and related technology to Pakistan beyond its legitimate requirements. Government have made it clear that this poses a threat to India's security and is not conducive to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. Government have been taking necessary steps to safeguard the security and national interest and will continue to do so in keeping with its assessment of developments pertaining to India's security environment.

Fake travel and telephone bills in ICCR

2500. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA':
SHRI S. MUTHU MANI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of a major racket in fake travel and telephone bills in the ICCR;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken any steps to fix responsibility in this regard;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA): (a) No, Sir. There is no such "racket in fake travel or telephone bills" in the ICCR. The Council's accounts are audited every year by the Comptroller & Auditor General of India and such irregularities have not been indicated by them. Additionally the latest report of the Standing Committee on External Affairs of Parliament which went into the working of the ICCR in considerable details has no reference to such a racket in Travel and Telephone bills.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) Not applicable.

(d) Not applicable.

(e) Question does not arise.

Indo-Bhutan bilateral ties

2501. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the areas in which India and Bhutan have established bilateral ties;

(b) whether any joint agreement has been signed by both the countries in the purpose; and

(c) the steps taken to establish Indo-Bhutan ties in the areas of common interest to both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SALEEM IQBAL SHERWANI): (a) The basic framework of bilateral relations between India and Bhutan is the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed between the two countries in 1949. Bilateral economic cooperation has been established between India and Bhutan in the areas of hydel power, geological exploration, technical cooperation, airport construction, road construction, electricity distribution, mining, health, education and telecommunication. India is the principal donor of aid for the economic development of Bhutan.

(b) The India-Bhutan Trade and Commerce Agreement was renewed in February 1995 and is effective for a five year period from March 1995. Other Agreements signed between the two countries include those relating to (1) implementation of the Jaldhaka Hydro-electric Project in September 1961; (2) exchange of Postal parcels in December in 1968; (3) Chukha Hydro-electric Project